

Functional Assessment of Problem Behavior

Goals:

- The basic assumptions about behavior
- Assessing problem behavior
- Four functions of problem behavior
- Special considerations with dealing with problem behavior
- ABC assessment

What is problem behavior? Unwanted, unsafe, unhealthy, or destructive consequences for the individual and or others.

Behavioral excess: _____ behavior responses that happen too often. Behavior that we want to _____.

Examples: crying, _____, _____, repetitive _____, _____, and self-injury.

Assumptions About Behavior

All behavior serves a function, a purpose. That function is related to the consequence of that behavior.

Behavior occurs within a context, in relation to the environment. Change in environment or _____ can lead to changes in behavior.

Consequences that lead to an increase in behavior are _____ and _____.

Consequences that lead to a decrease in behavior are _____ and _____.

Seeking access may be to get:

Attention from others: social approval

Tangible items: _____, _____, or preferred activities

Sensory stimulation: music, light, or touch

When the consequence is access to positive items or events, this is called _____.

When the consequences are escape from undesired items or events, this is called _____.

Examples of undesirable consequences may include _____, _____, _____, or _____.

Four Functions of Behavior

Acronym EATS

Escape, Attention, Tangibles, Sensory

Can there be more than 1 function for any problem behavior _True or False

Escape/Avoidance

- The function of escape is related to negative reinforcement.
- This refers to an individual engaging in problem behavior to escape something unpleasant.

Functional Assessment of Problem Behavior (continued)

Example:

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Environment | Behavior _ | Consequence-escapes |
| Broccoli at dinner | throws plate | avoids broccoli |
| Math work sheet | rips paper | avoids math worksheet |

Attention

- The attention function is related to positive reinforcement.
- This refers to an individual engaging in problem behavior to get someone to pay attention to him or her.

Example:

| | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Environment | Behavior _ | Consequence-access |
| Alone in a room | scream and stomps | family comes "what's wrong?" |
| Working at table | crying, "it's too hard" | teacher comes to help |

Tangible

- The tangible function is related to positive reinforcement.
- This refers to an individual engaging in problem behavior because they want access to items or activities.

Example:

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Environment | Behavior _ | Consequences- access |
| Sees moms phone | cries | mom gives child her phone |
| Candy at check out line | tantrums in grocery cart | grandma buys candy |

Sensory

- The sensory function is related to positive reinforcement.
- This refers to an individual engaging in problem behavior to feel sensory stimulation.
- The problem behavior itself is the reinforcement. This is called automatic reinforcement.

Example:

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Environment | Behavior _ | Consequences- stimulation |
| Alone in room | spinning around | feels good |
| Working on project | chewing on pencil end | feels good |

Special Considerations

Rule! Make sure problem behavior is not related to an underlying medical condition.

Medical issues do not cause behavior but can increase the likelihood that problem behavior will occur.

List examples: headache, _____

Functional Assessment of Problem Behavior (continued)

Once medical issues have been ruled out, Behavior Analyst can conduct assessments to determine the _____ of problem behavior.

Identifying the Function

Why function?

1. We need to know the function of problem behavior in order to develop an appropriate and effective intervention plan to reduce or eliminate problem behavior.
2. Make sure we do not accidentally reinforce the behavior and cause it to _____.

How do Behavior Analysts identify the function? Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA)

How do I assist? What does RBTs do? Assist _____ in _____ FBAs.

Functional Behavior Assessment is a process of figuring out WHY someone engages in problem behavior and how the behavior is related to the environment.

Problem-solving framework that allows Behavior Analyst to:

1. Identify context in which behavior occurs
2. Observe the consequence in order to generate hypotheses about function
3. Develop interventions based on function

ABC Data Collection

A common data system to assess behavior is ABC data collection

Guidelines

Here are some general guidelines to follow when collection ABC data:

- Be as specific as possible such as time of day, people in the room, and any changes in environments
- Only write down what I have observed
- Avoid mental states (happy, frustrated)
- Follow objective definitions of target behavior provided
- Describe objectively
- Ensure relevant data is collected in multiple settings
- Ensure relevant data is collected over a period of time

Functional Assessment of Problem Behavior (continued)

Collecting ABC Data

Analyzing ABC Data

BCBA will analyze the antecedents and consequences of the _____ over time to find patterns. Patterns tell us the WHY.

Looking for patterns in antecedents tells us under what circumstances or context.

Looking for patterns in consequences tell us what function or why.

By understanding function of problem behavior, Behavior Analyst can develop intervention to decrease the behavior by changing antecedents and consequences identified in ABC assessment.